



Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TEXAS TRADE ASSOCIATION CHARGED WITH PRICE FIXING

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- A Texas trade association of optometrists was charged today with fixing prices for eye examinations in central Texas, said the Department of Justice.

The Department's Antitrust Division charged Lake Country Optometric Society with participating in a conspiracy between November 1992 and February 1994 to suppress and eliminate competition in the provision of optometric services to patients in central Texas.

The criminal case, filed in U.S. District Court in Waco, Texas, charges that Lake Country Optometric Society and co-conspirators met and agreed to raise the prices to be charged for eye examinations and then monitored and enforced compliance with the agreement.

Anne K. Bingaman, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Antitrust Division, said today's charge resulted from a grand jury investigation in Waco, Texas, of suspected price fixing among optometrists in central Texas. The investigation was conducted by the Division's Dallas Field Office with the assistance of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The maximum penalty for a corporation convicted of a Sherman Act violation occurring after November 16, 1990, is the greatest of \$10 million, twice the gross pecuniary gain the corporation derived from the offense, or twice the gross pecuniary loss caused to the victims of the crime.

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